

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, since World War II, our presidents have been sending troops overseas without Congressional approval. Prior to World War II, it was traditional and constitutional that all presidents came to the Congress for authority to send troops.

Recently, the President has announced that he will most likely be sending thousands of American troops under NATO command to Kosovo. I think this is wrong. I have introduced legislation today that says that the President cannot send these troops without Congressional approval, merely restating what the Constitution says and how we followed the rules up until World War II.

Three years ago, the President sent troops into Bosnia and said they would be there for 6 months. They have been there now 3 years. We have spent over \$20 billion. Nobody even asks hardly at all anymore when these troops will be coming home.

We have been bombing and interfering with the security of Iraq for now over 8 years, and that continues, and we do not give Congressional approval of these acts. My legislation is simple. It just denies funding for sending troops into Kosovo without Congressional approval.

This is not complicated. It is very precise and very clear and very important that we as a Congress restate our constitutional obligation to supervise the sending of troops around the world.

It would be much better for us to spend this money that is being wasted in Bosnia and Iraq on our national defense. We spend less and less money every year on national defense but we spend more and more money on policing the world. I think that policy ought to change and it is the responsibility of the Congress, the body that has control of the purse strings, to do something about this.

If the President is permitted to do this, he does it not because he has constitutional authority but because the Congress has reneged on their responsibility to supervise the spending.

It is a bit ironic now that we are sending or planning to send troops to Kosovo. We have all read about and heard the horrible stories about the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, and yet our troops going to Kosovo are going to be sent with the intention that Kosovo cannot be independent; that they will not be able to separate themselves from Serbia; that they cannot decide under what government they want to live.

It is also interesting that one of the jobs of the troops in NATO, if they go into Kosovo, will be to disarm the Kosovo Liberation Army. That is hardly good sense. First, it is not good sense for us to give the permission or renege on our responsibility, but it does not make good sense to get involved in a war that has been going on

for many years, but it certainly does not make good sense for us to go in for the sole purpose of supporting Milosevic. He is the one that has been bombing the Kosovars and here we are, we want to disarm the liberation forces and at the same time prevent Kosovo from becoming independent.

The issue here is money, but there is also a bigger issue and that is the responsibility that we have to decide when troops should be sent. Once troops are sent into a foreign country, it is very difficult for us to bring our troops home.

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Troops in Kosovo will not serve the interests of the United States. They will not help our national security. It will drain funds that should be spent on national defense. At the same time it will jeopardize our national security by endangering our troops and raising the possibility of us becoming involved in a war spreading through the Balkans. This should not occur.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am asking my fellow colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation just to say that it is not the prerogative of the President to send troops around the world whenever he pleases. That is the prerogative of the Congress.

I do know that it has not been stated this clearly in the last 40 years, but it is about time we did. And besides, one thing more, the President has admitted, at least it has been in print, that he is likely to place these troops under a foreign commander, under a British general.

Mr. Speaker, we do not need this. We need to restrain the President's ability to send troops.

MAKING THE POSTAL SERVICE A PARTNER IN ASSURING LIVABILITY OF AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the most exciting issues that has arisen in this new year has been that of livable communities. It received prominence in the President's State of the Union address. Just this last week, on Friday, it was the feature article in the National Journal. The Saturday New York Times front page political memo had again an issue about livable communities. It is in large part an expression of how government can be a partner with citizens, with the business community, to try and really achieve what it is that Americans deeply care about because, at heart, Americans care when their children go out the door in the morning that they are safe, they want that

family to be economically secure, they want them to be healthy physically and in terms of their environment.

One example of that partnership that can make a difference for livable communities is the impact that the local post office has on small and medium sized communities particularly around the country. The post office is a symbol of how we connect to one another. The mail collection and distribution is vitally important in terms of community dynamic. Time and time again we find that post office on Main Street is an anchor for that Main Street business activity; it is a source of pride for people in the local communities; often it is a historic structure.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the location of that service, historic post offices around the country are being in some cases removed from those historic downtown locations. In some cases they are being, the post office simply has not been the type of neighbor that our communities deserve, and it is sadly not unknown for the postal service to not play by the same rules that the Federal Government imposes on others.

I have a series of examples in my office where these historic outposts have abandoned historic downtown locations to be located in a strip mall at the edge of town, perhaps without any paved sidewalks. Many communities in, for example, Portland, Oregon, where I am from, there is a lot of work to try and plan for the future to be able to promote a more livable community, and in fact the Oregon planning model is heralded by some as the most advanced in the United States. But despite the notoriety, despite the outreach, the Postal Service, for instance, was completely clueless to the work that we have been doing in our community to plan facilities for the next 50 years. It does not have to be that way.

I am introducing legislation this week that would require the Post Office to obey local land use and planning laws, to have them work with the local communities before they make decisions that can have such a wrenching affect on the fabric of community. I find it ironic that in case after case the Post Office gives the public more input into what version of the Elvis stamp it is going to produce than decisions that really can be life and death for small town America.

We also have a provision in this bill that makes some minor technical adjustments over what we had in the previous session of Congress because we have been listening to people in the Postal Service and we want to give them necessary flexibility. We do not want it to be a straightjacket, but we do want it to be a model of how America can and should work.

I would hope that, as we are promoting livable communities around the country, that the Federal Government will lead by example, by acting

the way we want other actors and actresses to behave to promote more livable communities. I would earnestly request that my colleagues join me in sponsoring this legislation to make the Postal Service a full partner in assuring the liveability of America's communities.

**MY GOAL AS A REPRESENTATIVE:
ENSURING FEDERAL POLICIES
ARE CONDUCTIVE TO PRESERVING
UNIQUE WAY OF LIFE IN RURAL
AMERICA**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Post headlines trumpets good news. The economy outpaces growth forecasts, the stock market is up, unemployment is down and prices from the grocery store to the gas pump are low and stable. The conventional wisdom is that life in America is as good as it gets, and perhaps for some Americans it is. But behind the statistics lies pockets in this country where the economic lives of our citizens are not so good.

I rise today on behalf of the citizens of rural Kansas, the farmers and ranchers, the independent oil producers, senior citizens on fixed income and communities leaders struggling to hold on to essential services. These folks take little comfort in government statistics showing how good the economy is doing. In rural Kansas times are tough. Agriculture, still our economic base, is caught in a vice grip of depressed prices. Even our most diversified operators are struggling as prices for almost everything we produce in Kansas, cattle, corn, wheat, hogs, milo, soybeans, are all at historic lows. The new Census of Agriculture shows Kansas has 1,685 fewer farms this year than just 5 years ago. USDA reports that net farm income will be down for the third year in a row, and exports are reduced as well.

The President's new budget fails to address the difficulties in agriculture. No new money for crop insurance. Farm program spending is reduced, and money for export promotion is cut by 15 percent. Even money for our food donation program such as P.L. 480 is cut by almost a billion dollars from last year's level.

Mr. Speaker, we in Congress must find solutions, and removing agricultural sanctions is a start. The American farmer cannot continue with 52 percent of the world markets threatened by unilateral sanctions. I joined in introducing legislation on the first day of this session to remove agricultural sanctions, and we must continue to press hard on this issue.

The bottom has been knocked out of the domestic oil and gas industry as

well. Thirty thousand wells have been shut down in Kansas alone due to declining prices. Employment in Kansas' oil and gas industry is down from a high of 40,000 jobs to under 13,000 today. According to the Kansas Geological Survey, if prices remain at their current levels, oil receipts in Kansas will drop 900 million and our State will lose an additional 5000 jobs.

As a country, we have spent billions, even gone to war to protect foreign petroleum sources. Should we not do something to preserve our domestic industry as well? We now import two-thirds of the oil consumed in this country, and this reliance only continues to grow. Unfortunately, again, the President's budget is little assistance. Energy research and development is cut. No funding is included for additional purchases for the strategic petroleum reserve. With oil prices at this low level, it is an excellent time to replenish this reserve and fill it to full capacity.

Tax relief for the oil and gas industry must be a priority. I support legislation to lower taxes on marginal well production in the United States and to create incentives for inactive wells to be brought back into production. This industry has been taxed excessively when times are good, and we must now provide relief when it is needed.

Compounding our economic struggles in rural America is the misguided Federal policies that threaten the viability of our communities. The 1997 budget bill made significant cuts on Medicare programs that our seniors and hospitals rely upon. The President has proposed in his budget yet another round of Medicare cuts to hospitals. For rural Kansas, hospitals are already hanging on by a string. Rather than another round of hastily crafted cuts we need a long-term plan to ensure the solvency of this critical program and to ensure that rural health care providers and patients are treated fairly. I, along with other Members of the House Rural Health Care Coalition intend to advance legislation packaged to restore fairness to rural areas under the Medicare program. In addition to improving reimbursements we need greater incentives to encourage doctors and other health care professionals to practice in rural areas.

We have a unique way of life in rural America. The rural way of life with all of its benefits is part of our national heritage, and it is one that is worth fighting to preserve. My goal as a representative in 1999 is to ensure that Federal policies recognize our uniqueness and that they are workable, fair and conducive to carrying on our lives in rural America. I look forward to working with my colleagues to accomplish these goals this session.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO PETER
McCANN, COMPOSER OF "AMONG
THE MISSING"**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Peter McCann.

It was through my involvement with the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children and as chairman and founder of the Congressional Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children that I had the privilege of being introduced to Mr. McCann. Missing and exploited children is an issue of great concern to me and one that I hold in the absolute highest regard. As a parent of two children, I cannot even begin to imagine the hurt families of missing children feel as they are left to wait and hope for the return of their son or daughter.

Well, after garnering support from the Caucus and from the National Center to record a song inspired by the plight of these families, I was flattered that Peter McCann would offer his time and talent to compose such a song. Peter performed his duty as a songwriter in superb fashion by composing the heartfelt duet: Among The Missing, and because of his passionate commitment to this project Peter used his connections in Nashville to convince George Massenburg of Seventeen Grand Recording Studios to produce the sound track and to donate the studio time to make this CD. In addition, recording artists Michael McDonald and Kathy Mattea recorded the song to the accompaniment of an 18-piece string section and 35-voice chorus.

Well, Peter is a seasoned veteran of the music industry, and this accomplishment represents only one of his many musical achievements. He originally embarked on his career at Motown Records in 1971, and after releasing two albums of his own he began a lengthy and productive relationship with CBS as a songwriter during which time Peter began advocating the rights of music artists with his involvement in the Songwriters Association. Later, Peter lobbied pro bono on behalf of his colleagues here on Capitol Hill using his organizational leadership skills as the co-chair of the legislative committee for the National Songwriters' Association International. His songs have been recorded by Julio Iglesias, Kenny Rogers, Lee Greenwood, Reba McEntyre, Crystal Gayle, the Oak Ridge Boys, Isaac Hayes, Karen Carpenter, Donnie Osmond, and that is just to list a few among the long list of musical entertainers.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this most recent recording will provide Peter and the others involved a true sense of pride and a memory of one of their most satisfying accomplishments as